

SALT Pact Hits New Hill Snag

By Jack Fuller
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Chances dimmed yesterday for President Nixon to have a package of arms limitation agreements ratified by Congress to take to the Republican convention next week.

The House unexpectedly delayed its scheduled debate on the U.S.-Russian offensive weapons pact, while Senate disagreement over when and how to stop debate on amendments to the agreement continued to prevent any vote on the matter.

Meanwhile, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met behind closed doors to question government intelligence experts about a charge that the Russians had lied to the United States during the negotiations that led to the agreement.

Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) said after a CIA briefing there is "no basis for charges that the Russians lied."

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), whose amendment to the agreement has precipitated the extended debate, said Tuesday that he had "intelligence" information that the Russians have only 42 Y-class submarines deployed or under construction, though they had claimed to have 48.

Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) urged Jackson to back up his charge and urged the Nixon administration to present its side of the story.

"I don't believe the President was bamboozled or taken in by the Russians," Mansfield said.

Administration officials before the agreement was signed noted publicly the discrepancy between the Russian and U.S. estimates of Soviet submarine strength, and attributed it to a disagreement about the definition of "under construction."

The House ran behind on its schedule yesterday and postponed debate on the arms agreement. Today the House is scheduled to take up a controversial measure involving the busing of schoolchildren, and it may not reach the arms agreement until Friday.

No progress was reported by Senate leaders on reaching an agreement to end debate, and Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) said there appeared to be a "movement to prevent the Senate from voting."

Jackson's amendment would urge the President to seek "equality" of offensive weapons between the U.S. and Soviet Union, in the second round of arms talks.

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